UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
3 1761 00651595 1

PR
6021
E494M8

A Muse at Sea

A Muse at Sea

Verses

By

E. Hilton Young

London: Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd.
3 Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.2 1919

PR
6021
E494M8

First published in 1919
All rights reserved

FOREWORD

SOME of these verses first saw the light in the *Ducal Weekly*, a newspaper published in H.M.S. *Iron Duke* in 1914 and 1915, whence they found their way into *The Morning Post*; some in the *Cornhill Magazine*; and some in the *Nation*. For making a book of them my apology is

(*a*) that it is a very little one,

(*b*) that I never did it before,

(*c*) and that I will never do it again.

E. H. Y.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	5
SUNSET AFLOAT	9
MINE-SWEEPING TRAWLERS	13
THE *IRON DUKE* TO THE *VICTORY*	14
TO THE BOYS LOST IN OUR CRUISERS	15
A WILTSHIRE MAN AT SEA	16
VOICES	17
TRAGEDY	19
ANY SEAMAN TO HIS WIFE	20
CHRISTMAS	21
DRIFTER PATROL	22
AFTER NEUVE CHAPELLE	23
NORTH SEA STARS	24
IN A TURRET	25
ἰσοτέλεστος . . .	29
IN THE THIRD YEAR OF WAR	30
AIR SERVICE	33
AT THE GATE	34
RETURN	36

SUNSET AFLOAT

Down goes the sun.
The distant hills resign their transient rose.
Along the fading loch the shadows close.
Another night's begun.

The bugle sings
" sailormen, sailormen, rest till to-morrow, to-morrow ;
to-morrow, to-morrow brings gladness, or sorrow, or sorrow ;
what matter what it brings ? "

The ship's bell tolls.
Pale through the dusk as spray the sea-gulls sweeping
hail the long notes with laughter and with weeping.
They are drowned seamen's souls.

Now, colours down !
While we their servants, to salute their falling,
pause for a moment at the pipe's shrill calling
that bears our greeting, blown
by night-winds, home.

★

England, can you not faintly hear our greeting ?
Can you not feel our hearts with your heart beating,

when we, your sailors, come
at the sun's setting
to this brief rite of reverence, and send
our thoughts to landward at the long day's end ?

One moment, now, forgetting
the round of toil,
we strain to see the vision of your beauty,
to hear the reasonable voice of duty
asking, " Is fame the spoil ? "
" Is hate the spur ? " . .

A smile for fame ! The masters of the sea
need no such profit in their mastery.
Let fame young nations stir
with no sea story.

It is enough for us to wear the crown
our fathers won, and hand the laurels down
unfaded in their glory.

A smile for hate !
Seek hate where hearts are festering with fear ;
the winds and waves have cleansed us from it here.

★

To what, then, dedicate
our service true ?

O island refuge of our homing hearts,
across the cold and sundering sea, that parts
your children still from you,

that coast-line lonely
of shadowy fields and mountains far away,
that is our inspiration and our stay!
Your peace and welfare only
are all our care.

Empires and states and high disputes of kings,
treaties and laws, these are hard landsmen's things;
enough for us our share
in simpler ends—

a strong devotion to each kindly face
beyond those cliffs; faith to our native place,
whose intimacy lends
our brightest memories—

the green recesses of the hawthorn hedge,
the fairy trill of warblers in the sedge,
elms, where the brown owl cries
of evenings,

each dear, familiar turning in the town,
the solemn bastion of the sun-bleached down
gemmed with small azure wings,

glades cool to see,
where love, with his shy followers of the wild
waylays the wayfarer, the woodland child,
and keeps him company.

★

O very breath
of life, our England! All we have, we give
for gifts of thine that made it good to live—
your guardians to the death.

H.M.S. *Aurora*, 1916.

MINE-SWEEPING TRAWLERS

NOT ours the fighter's glow,
the glory, and the praise.
Unnoticed to and fro
we pass our dangerous ways.

We sift the drifting sea,
and blindly grope beneath;
obscure and toilsome we,
the fishermen of death.

But when the great ships go
to battle through the gloom,
our hearts beat high to know
we cleared their path of doom.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1914.

THE *IRON DUKE* TO THE *VICTORY*

As once with you, so now with me
the prayers and hopes of England are,
that bear her fortunes on the sea
to some more furious Trafalgar.

That part you played 'tis mine to play,
steel-heart as oak-heart beating high,
that of us twain all men may say—
their joint renown shall never die.

A hundred years, old *Victory*,
your name has rung. God grant, at mine
not less, a hundred hence, the eye
of every English lad may shine.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1914.

TO THE BOYS LOST IN OUR CRUISERS

OTHERS bring much, but these had most to bring ;
all hope, all dreams, life left an unrun race ;
for that has death, the just and gentle king,
now set them first in place.

Sea-children ! Still, by quiet copse and close,
safe through your service, other children play
Dear brothers are you now to all of those,
for whom you died that day.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1914.

A WILTSHIRE MAN AT SEA

THE golden leaves, now ceaselessly careering
in oak-crowned Savernake,
gallop like tiny horsemen down the clearing,
rest in the deep fern brake.

Far up at Glorian the wind is sighing,
and as the light grows less
across the down-land sounds the plover's crying,
the voice of loneliness.

Thither, from this sad waste of waters streaming,
all the unending night,
my heart returns, to see by Kennet gleaming
one cottage window-light.

Yet for your sake it is that I must roam now,
dear land, dear lads I know.
I love you so, I could not stay at home now,
nor pay the debt I owe.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1914.

VOICES

The Submarines say :

No sound, no stir, no sight,
yet watching early and late,
is there one that waits at your gate
like a fierce, blind beast of the deep
with feelers stretched to the light ?
Say, can you fight ? can you flee ?
You are penned in a ditch like sheep
for fear of the wolves of the sea !

The Destroyers say :

Flung in a dancing chain,
like spindrift flung by the breeze,
we riot across the seas,
reeling and mad with the race,
dazed with the wind and the rain.
A shadow ? A light that shone ?
We whirl from far to the chase.
Look ! We are come, we are gone !

The Battleships say :

Fierce, implacable ghosts,
in patience we hold our ways,
and weave our majestic maze ;
join it, if join you dare !

The ranks of our spectral hosts
stand first in the house of death ;
who shall face our Gorgon glare,
or the flaming blast of our breath ?

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1915.

TRAGEDY

On Lockridge Stone we used to sit
  when farming work was over,
Tom, Bert, and I, and little Kit,
  and each of us a lover ;

for each of us loved shepherd's Kate,
  and praised her sweet and cleanly ;
save Bert, his talk we used to hate,
  he always talked so meanly.

Now Kit and Tom are dead and gone ;
  they shot them in the trenches ;
and I am here at sea alone,
  and curse all silly wenches.

For Bert, he stayed at home, the limb !
  I'll pay him for it, one day ;
and Kate, she's going to marry him,
  the wedding is on Monday.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1915.

ANY SEAMAN TO HIS WIFE

(A CENSOR'S RHYME)

My lass, I take the pleasure now
to send a loving line.
It's only just to say as how
the weather's far from fine.

I trust that this, which leaves me fit,
will find you in the pink.
Your loving Joe don't want a bit
of baccy, he don't think.

So Mrs. Brown next door says that !
My lass, you mustn't mind her.
She always was a proper cat.
I wish I'd been behind her !

I don't want none of 'Liza's cheek :
you tell her, straight and proper.
I'll send you fifteen bob next week.
Give Bill a kiss from Poppa.

We'll teach the Germans when we meet
to keep us waiting so !
We mayn't write only half a sheet,
so now good-by.

Yours,
JOE.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1915.

CHRISTMAS

A BOY was born at Bethlehem
that knew the haunts of Galilee.
He wandered on Mount Lebanon,
and learned to love each forest tree.

But I was born at Marlborough,
and love the homely faces there;
and for all other men besides
'tis little love I have to spare.

I should not mind to die for them,
my own dear downs, my comrades true.
But that great heart of Bethlehem,
he died for men he never knew.

And yet, I think, at Golgotha,
as Jesus' eyes were closed in death,
they saw with love most passionate
the village street at Nazareth.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1914.

DRIFTER PATROL

To and fro the drifters go,
night and day to Ronaldsay,
there and back across the Flow,
patrolling and patrolling.

What a grim and barren isle !
cold and grey, night and day ;
not a smile—not a smile ;
would the night were over !

For at daybreak we shall hear,
all along that lowland grey,
far and near, faint and clear,
the lark's confused rejoicing.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1915.

AFTER NEUVE CHAPELLE

AT home there comes an answer from the hills
to the glad challenge that the sun has made.
Anemones like stars and daffodils
shine in the western glade.

There is no quickening and no glory here,
no stir of life re-born in ecstasy ;
the barren waves feel not the changing year ;
there is no spring at sea.

But oh ! this year it is a happier thing
in those bright flowers' return no part to take ;
for one that was the spirit of the spring
has died ; and for their sake.

A daffodil lies broken in the way,
a wind-flower, withered and untimely dead,
and from the wonder of the blossoming spray
all radiance is fled.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1915.

NORTH SEA STARS

REMOTE and silent, through the northern night,
there falls the blessing of a faint starlight.
Across the dark it calls the memory,
England ! of those that gave their lives for thee,
and now like stars, so many and so high,
will shine for ever in our English sky.
And we, while thus we traverse endlessly
the waste, unkindly places of the sea,
by sailor's peril and by exile's pain,
we gain one prize, and one enough to gain.
It is a sense of inward unity
with those, our stars : a passionate sympathy
in which our spirits now with theirs are one,
and death is dead in that communion ;
here, where the heaven is set with signs of them,
and sea-winds sing to us their requiem.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1915.

IN A TURRET

So here I take my stand,
a little shining wheel
of polished steel
under my hand.
My business is to mind it.
When we begin the fight,
towards the right
swiftly I wind it;
and when the fight is over,
I turn it back again,
with might and main,
this air-blast cover.

Outside, the fight will rage
half-heard, the turrets' voices,
great bellowing noises;
I mind this gauge.
The needle should keep steady.
That mark, there on the glass,
it must not pass.
I must be ready
to turn the wheel and cure it;
or we should surely smother
some one or other
up in the turret.

I am most fortunate
that such a simple way

to help, that day,
should be my fate.
Were I to turn it wrong
England might lose the fight.
By turning right
I make her strong.

How will the business go?
We'll be on watch up there,
and then we'll hear
the bugle blow;
notes in a rising spray;
"Action!" that means; and fast
the men stream past,
and stream away.
Soon the whole ship is still.
The stir is at an end,
and all attend
a single will.

The great guns rock and sway;
awakened from their dozing,
they start a-nosing
the air for prey.
Down in the magazine
there is half-dark and heat,
a shuffle of feet,
smells, sweet and keen.

Pipes knock importunate,
like spirits, on the wall.
The voice-tubes call,
impersonal, irate.
" Load," cries a bodiless voice;
and sudden from their wells
leap monstrous shells;
a hissing noise,
a clank, and they are gone,
whisked upwards out of sight;
one left, one right;
our part is done.
They jump into the breech.
The cordite gives a bump,
and out they jump
with one loud screech.
Bright balls of liquid fire
break through the smoke-clouds dim,
one instant swim,
and then expire.
There, where each monster strikes,
misses—and fountains splash—
hits, with a flash—
that row of spikes,
that is the enemy,
hull-down and hid. His tall
foremasts are all
there is to see.

All that they see above;
here there is nought to see.
Most heedfully
the seamen move
the levers to and fro.
The trunk turns round about,
and in and out
the travellers go.
The shells glide through the gloom.
There is no din of battle;
only a rattle,
a distant boom,
muffled and dull; and death
puffs gently down on us
his poisonous
and reeking breath.

Such, in this dim-lit crypt,
our task; while over-head
an empire's thread
of fate is snipt.
But, hoping or foreboding,
that will we little heed;
heeding instead
only our loading.

This corner is where I go
my tiny wheel to take,
for England's sake,
and turn it—so.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*, 1915.

ἰσοτέλεστος Ἄϊδος,
ὅτε Μοῖρ' ἀναπέφηνε,
θάνατος ἐς τελευτάν.

Soph. O.C. 1220.

For half my years our ways were parted wide;
your name alone I knew.
Then for a time we travelled side by side,
and you were real, and true.

Through all the vigils in a wandering year
of days and nights at sea,
I waited still for you, and you were near,
but still unknown to me.

Until, in blinding fury and surprise,
in thunder and in flame,
with wonder and with beauty in your eyes,
sudden and swift, you came,

and paused to look at me, and took my hand;
but turned, and hurried by,
Death, when you call me, I shall understand,
we are friends now, you and I.

San Giovanni di Medua, 1916.

IN THE THIRD YEAR OF WAR

WOULD that the war were over, and again
we walked together in a Wiltshire lane.
The West shrills keenly through the Hackpen
thorn ;
from that high, lonely wood by Winterborne
wet leaves are whirled far out across the vale.
We should find comfort in the down-land gale ;
its glorious blast, so wild, yet angerless,
blows sorrow from the heart, and bitterness.

So, like some wandering child, we stretch our
hands
to shining, phantom faces, and far lands
of heart's desire.
O solace vainly sought
to light the sad opacity of thought !
There is no charm in any outward thing
to ease the heart from smarting at the sting
of friendship snapped, of dull, frustrated days,
of hopes that perish in the desolate ways.
The wine of mirth and sympathy is spilled
wherewith the vessel of our hearts was filled,
lending bright influence to the wind and trees.
Our lives are empty now ; and how for these
can earth, that lives not, find reviving breath
to quicken the sterility of death ?
The sun-rays still go wheeling o'er the hill ;

but closed those eyes their passing used to fill
with sudden glory. Say, shall we return
where every sight can teach us but to mourn ?
Shall we return, where every field and tree
is radiant with the light of memory ?
Here by this hedge-row Rupert musing lay ;
this pool was Nigel's haunt at morning grey ;
down that hill-side Ned ran so cheerily
the day he left, and turned to call good-bye.
If once again we climb to Barbary
none but the dead will keep us company ;
their printless feet will walk with ours, unseen,
and silent voices fill the listening dene.
" Dear land of noonday light "—we said before ;
but now—" dear land of ghosts "—for evermore.

The old, untroubled world is dead, where laughter
was still more real than tears ; and we hereafter
must live with grief for our reality.
We will return, but not forgetfully
to breathe oblivion with the cleansing wind
and gain dull ease and vacant peace of mind.
We will return ; but rather there to gain
more vital apprehension of our pain
in memory of the dead, and of our pride
in presence of the land for which they died ;
beyond the lonely wood once more to lie
where that remote green bastion fronts the sky ;

to see beneath us plains and woodlands wide
encompassed round about and unified
in a great flood of light ; once more to press
our fingers in the turf's soft friendliness,
fragrant with flowerets of thyme ; and thence
shall pass into our hearts a keener sense
of what could those great hearts so greatly move,
England, their hope, their faith, their passion of
love.

H.M.S. *Centaur*, 1917.

AIR SERVICE

(FOR M. J. G. D. 1896–1918)

It is the dark at home.
Sorrow and danger have put out the light.
No voice, no star has come
to still the tribulation of the night.

Yet, though the beacons fail
in England, there is still some glory there
Up from that shadowed vale
rise to the light her children of the air,

selfless, intent, and strong
to cast all doubting down to earth beneath ;
glad as the lark in song ;
swifter than all things save the wings of death.

Not, golden lads, in vain
the royal gesture of your offerings.
The dawn, that comes again
to England's spirit, comes upon your wings.

NIEUPORT BAINS, 1918.

AT THE GATE

It is all over ; all my travelling
in changing, curious time ; and I
of every vital thing that life can bring
have only left, to die.

I have no hope, no fear for my distress.
There is no man on earth so free.
Hope cannot vex one that is futureless ;
fear ends in certainty.

No hope, no fear, no triumph, no regret,
but darkness of the gathering shades.
What have I left to hold for comfort yet,
now that the daylight fades ?

I will think of all good things that I have known,
of everything that I loved best.
I will take all their beauty for my own
to be my strength and rest.

★

Stand by me now, all tranquil memories !—
the firelit ceiling's shadow-press
a waking child has watched in ecstasies
of drowsy happiness.

The long, wet orchard grass, the swift mill-race,
the shining blossom on the bough,

the lads that came there for a bathing-place,
dear lads !—stand by me now !

And one high verge of upland ; when the night
was falling on the fields beneath,
thence could the poiséd spirit take its flight
far beyond time and death.

★

The time is come : and last, to be my guide
through this dim ending of the way,
I take the hero-soul of one who died,
and, living, lit the day.

O friend I loved, I raise in thoughts of thee
the heart that beat at one with thine.
There is a sound of guns upon the sea ;
now, Miles, thy hand in mine—

H.M.S. *Vindictive*, 1918.

RETURN

THIS was the way that, when the war was over,
we were to pass together. You, its lover,
would make me love your land, you said, no less,
its shining levels and their loneliness,
the reedy windings of the silent stream,
your boyhood's playmate, and your childhood's
dream.

The war is over now : and we can pass
this way together. Every blade of grass
is you : you are the ripples on the river :
you are the breeze in which they leap and quiver.
I find you in the evening shadows falling
athwart the fen, you in the wildfowl calling :
and all the immanent vision cannot save
my thoughts from wandering to your unknown
grave.

ST. IVES, 1919.

Printed by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury.

Sidgwick & Jackson's List of Poetry

ANDERSON, J. REDWOOD. Walls and Hedges. 3s. net. [*Shortly.*

ASQUITH, HERBERT. The Volunteer and other Poems. *Second Edition, with new Poems added.* 2s. net.

BROOKE, RUPERT. Collected Poems. With a Memoir. Two Portraits in Photogravure. *Fifth Impression.* Buckram, 10s. 6d. net.

————**Poems.** (*First issued in* 1911.) *Twenty-fifth Impression.* 3s. net.

————**1914 and other Poems.** With a Portrait. *Twenty-sixth Impression.* 3s. net.

————**Selected Poems.** With a new Portrait. *Fourth Impression.* Cloth, 3s. 6d. net; leather, 5s. net.

————**The Old Vicarage, Grantchester.** With a Woodcut by NOEL ROOKE. Wrappers, 1s. net.

COLLEER, CLAUDE. Youth and Age. Wrappers. 1s. net.

DAY, JEFFERY. Poems and Rhymes. With a Portrait in Photogravure. 3s. net.

DRINKWATER, JOHN. Swords and Ploughshares. *Fourth Impression.* 3s. net.

————**Olton Pools.** *Fourth Impression.* 3s. net.

————**Pawns; Three Poetic Plays.** *Third Impression,* 3s. net.

————**Poems, 1908—1914.** With a Portrait. *Third Impression.* 5s. net.

————**Tides.** *Second Impression.* 3s. net.

————**Loyalties.** 3s. net.

ENSOR, R. C. K. **Odes and other Poems.** *Second Impression.* Boards, **2s.** net.

FLETCHER, J. S. **Leet Livvy.** **2s. 6d.** net.

GARSTIN, CROSBIE. **Vagabond Verses.** **3s.** net.

GOULD, GERALD. **Poems.** Wrappers, **1s. 6d.** net.

———My Lady's Book. Cloth, **2s. 6d.** net.

GRAVES, C. L. **War's Surprises, and other Verses.** *Second Impression.* **3s. 6d.** net.

———Lauds and Libels. **3s. 6d.** net.

GURNEY, IVOR. **Severn and Somme.** *Second Impression.* **3s.** net.

———War's Embers. **3s.** net.

HARVEY, F. W. **A Gloucestershire Lad.** *Fifth Impression.* **3s.** net.

———Gloucestershire Friends. Poems from a German Prison Camp. *Second Impression.* **3s.** net.

HOUSMAN, LAURENCE. **Selected Poems. 3s. 6d.** net.

JENKINS, ELINOR. **Poems.** *Second Impression.* **3s.** net.

JENKINS, A. L. **Forlorn Adventurers.** Cloth, **2s. 6d.** net; Wrappers, **1s. 6d.** net.

KIRBY, ELIZABETH. **The Bridegroom.** **3s.** net.

MACAULAY, ROSE. **The Two Blind Countries.** **3s.** net.

MASEFIELD, JOHN. The Everlasting Mercy. *Nineteenth Impression.* 3s. 6d. net.

———The Widow in the Bye Street. *Fourth Impression.* 3s. 6d. net.

MOORE, BERNARD. A Cornish Chorus. 2s. 6d. net.

NICKLIN, J. A. Nunc Dimittis. 2s. 6d. net.

———"And they went to the War." Wrappers, 6d. net.

NIVEN, FREDERICK. Maple-leaf Songs. Wrappers, 1s. net.

NORMAN, A. B. Ditchling Beacon. Wrappers, 1s. 6d. net.

OWEN, EVERARD. Three Hills and other Poems. *Second Impression.* Wrappers, 6d. net.

PHILLIMORE, R. C. Poems. 3s. net.

PLOWMAN, MAX. First Poems. 3s. net.

SHAKESPEARE, W. G. Ypres and other Poems. Boards, 2s. net.

SHANKS, EDWARD. Poems. 3s. net.

"SOME VERSE." By F. S. *Fourth Impression.* Boards, 2s. 6d. net.

"SONGS OF THE BLUE DRAGON." Cloth, 1s. 6d.; Wrappers, 1s.

TAYLOR, VIOLA. The Story of Amaryllis, and other Verses. 3s. 6d. net.

TURNER, W. J. The Hunter and other Poems. 3s. 6d. net.

———The Dark Fire. 3s. 6d. net.

TYNAN, KATHARINE. Irish Poems. 3s. 6d. net.

———Flower of Youth. *Fourth Impression.* 3s. 6d. net.

———The Holy War. 3s. 6d. net.

———Late Songs. *Third Impression.* 3s. 6d. net.

———Herb o' Grace. 3s. 6d. net.

YOUNG, E. HILTON. A Muse at Sea. 2s. 6d. net.

POEMS OF TO-DAY: an Anthology. *Sixteenth Impression.* (*72nd—82nd Thousand.*) Stiff paper covers, 2s. net; cloth, 3s. net.

YORKSHIRE DIALECT POEMS (1673—1915). *Compiled with an Introduction by Prof. F. W. Moorman. Second Edition.* Boards, 2s. net; paper, 1s. net.

An anthology of the best poems in "broad Yorkshire."

SIDGWICK & JACKSON, Ltd., 3 Adam Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.2

A Muse at Sea

by E. Hilton Young

—

Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd.

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

PR
6021
E494M8

Kennet, Edward Hilton Young
A muse at sea